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27 June 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: NIOs/USSR, EUR, SP, GPF and VC/NIC

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth
C/NIC

SUBJECT: Estimative Issues in Strategic Arms Control
During the Fall of 1988

Following up on our discussion of Friday, 24 June, attached are my thoughts about the issues we seem to be facing in considering whether and what kind of NIE to do on Soviet arms control policy in the near future.

Over the weekend, I've picked up gossip that the USG will push for the ABM Treaty Review to be held during July so as to get it out of the way before the Republican convention and the beginning of the campaign. In the context of that review, whether or not the Soviets will agree to tear down Krasnoyarsk (sans our doing likewise at Fylingdale and Thule but with other presumed contingencies required, e.g., a satisfactory outcome on START and SDI issues) is regarded as an important issue deserving a community judgment.

The attached list of issues/questions is more political than technical. One could and perhaps should get more technical. For example, might the Soviets go for these exotic ideas of "test range in space," "sensors run free"?

As we noted on Friday, the real question is what can we do that actually has value. But it seems increasingly likely that we shall be forced to do something comprehensive -- for the record, as it were -- whether it has value or not.

Fritz W. Ermarth

Attachment:
As stated

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ESTIMATIVE ISSUES REGARDING SOVIET ARMS CONTROL POLICY IN LATE 1988.

1. How does the Gorbachev regime regard arms control in the context of wider foreign policy and domestic goals?

As a means to modulate competition and contrive ways to gain advantage? Or as a means to "end the Cold War?" (How good a guy is Gorby?)

Whatever Gorbachev's policies and views, how is the ruling establishment of the USSR (with or without Gorby) going to view arms control in the years ahead?

What is the mix of political-atmospheric and strategic-technical objectives that animates Soviet policy toward START?

2. What is the Soviet political gameplan for the rest of the Reagan Administration?

Do they really want a START agreement with RR? Or are process and activism the key requirements?

How important to the Soviets is continuity from RR to successor, i.e., successor's acceptance of whatever RR has so far negotiated?

Do Soviet perceptions of parties and candidates influence their game plan?

3. Prospects for changes in Soviet START related positions, new initiatives.

SLCMs, counting rules, mobile verification, SDI...

4. ABM Treaty Review: Will the Soviets cave on Krasnoyarsk?

Do the Soviets appreciate the political centrality of this issue? How much of a political test is it in the Kremlin?

5. Soviet attitudes toward compliance under Gorbachev.

What, if anything, has happened to Soviet political attitudes toward arms control compliance under the Gorbachev regime? Has it become more respectful of the requirement for compliance (law abiding)?

6. Strategic requirements and force development scenarios, with compliance, with cheating.

How do Soviet strategic force modernization requirements jibe or conflict with prospective START provisions? What does this say about what the Soviets demand/reject in START; will and won't do under a START agreement?

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Are there significant cheating incentives? If so, how might the Soviets cheat?

7. Are there significant political and technical relationships between START issues and other arms control issues (e.g., CST, SNF, chemical weapons, nuclear free zones) in the current period?

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